


Teaching Students to Write Like Reporters—Grades 6–12

Nancy Frey



Solution Tree









**Teaching
Students to Write
Like Reporters
in Grades 6–12**

Nancy Frey
San Diego State University




www.fisherandfrey.com

The Intent of the Standards

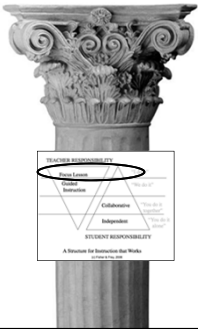
Knowledge	 Balance of Informational and Literary Texts
	 Knowledge in the Disciplines
	 Staircase of Complexity
Language	 Text-Dependent Questions
	 Writing From Sources
	 Academic Vocabulary

(Source: Student Achievement Partners)

**Components of
Gradual Release of Responsibility in Writing**

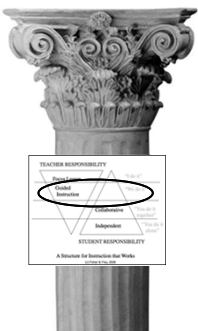
Shared Interactive Writing	Scaffolded Writing Instruction and Collaborative Learning	Accountable Independent Writing
		

Shared Interactive Writing



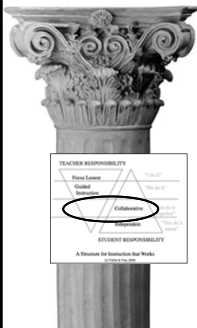
- Teacher writes. Students follow along.
- Teacher models the use of conventions, word choice, text structures, and text features to meet the needs of the audience, task, and purpose.
- Teacher and students query the developing text.
- Discuss.

Scaffolded Writing Instruction



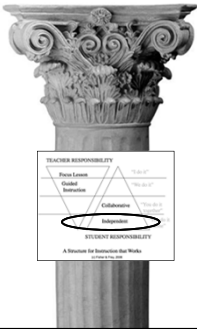
- Instruction is used:
- In small-group and needs-based settings
 - In K–2 to address foundational writing skills, as well as meaning making
 - In 3–12 to focus on the craft required to create increasingly challenging texts
 - To engage students who need more support

Collaborative Learning in Writing



- It encourages:
- Student-to-student interaction through argumentation
 - Academic language practice
 - Consolidating thinking
 - Strategies to resolve problems
 - Methods to transform talk into written products (e.g., brainstorming, peer responses to writing)

Accountable Independent Writing



- Students apply what they have learned in other phases.
- They write for task, audience, and purpose.
- Writing includes pieces developed in a short period, as well as those created over many days.



Types of Accountability

- Teacher conferring
- Self-reports of progress in writing
- Published writing

Writing From Sources



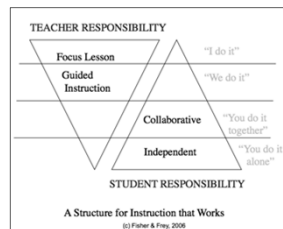
Writing Standards

- Three Text Types (Standards 1–3)
 - Opinion, argument
 - Informative, explanatory
 - Narrative
- Many genres
- Support for text types
 - Standards 4–10



Writing Instruction Using A Gradual Release Model

- Language experience approach
- Interactive writing
- Writing models
- Generative sentences
- Power writing
- RAFT writing
- Independent writing



Language Experience Approach

- Students are active language users.
- Teacher transcribes students' words (whole class, small group, or individual).
- Students extend text.

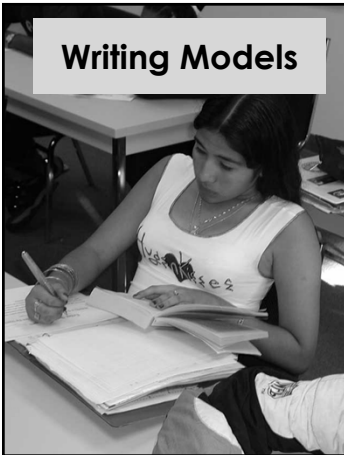


Interactive Writing

- Oral language
- Joint composition and construction
- "Sharing the pen" as students write in front of their peers

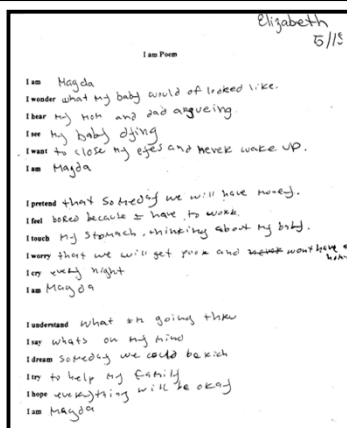


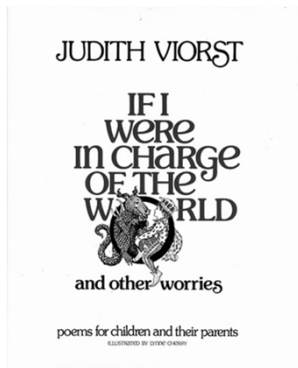
Writing Models



Models offer a pattern or form to scaffold writing using existing text.

Students insert original writing.





If I Were in Charge of the World

Original

If I were in charge
of the world
I'd cancel oatmeal,
Monday mornings,
Allergy shots,
and also Sara
Steinberg.

Edgar's

If I were in charge of
the world
I'd cancel posers,
police raids,
country music,
and also bras.



**Write dialogue
for each
of the scenes.**

Basic Writing Frame

Although I already knew that _____,
I have learned some new facts about
_____. For example, I learned that
_____. I also learned that _____.
Another fact I learned _____.
However the most interesting thing I
learned was _____.

Making a claim

I think that _____, because _____.
Although I agree that _____, I still think that _____.
She says _____, and I agree, because _____.

Supporting or critiquing a claim

Her idea that _____ is supported by _____,
and _____.
For example, _____ shows that _____.
They say that _____, but _____, _____, and _____ say differently.

Introducing and addressing a counterargument

Of course, you might disagree and say that _____.
Some might say _____, but I would say that _____.
While it is true that _____, that does not always mean that _____.

Stating a conclusion or summing up an argument

In conclusion, I believe _____.
In sum: _____ is shown by _____ and _____.
For these reasons, _____ should be _____.

(Source: Glencoe Literature 2009. Used with permission, Glencoe/McGraw-Hill.)

Generative Sentences

- Given a word and conditions about the placement of the word, students write a sentence.
- It forces attention to grammar and word meaning.
- Use student examples for editing.

"Volcanoes" in the Fourth Position

The name for volcanoes in the Pacific is called the Ring of Fire.

"Volcanoes" in the Fourth Position

I don't like volcanoes.

Try these . . .

Word	Position	Length
cell	3rd	> 6
Because	1st	< 10
Constitution	last	= 10



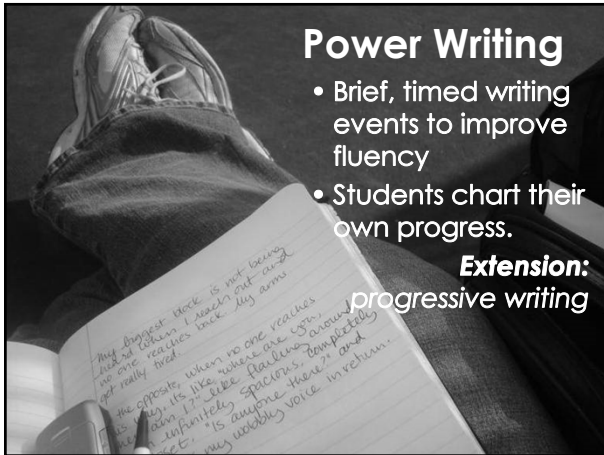
Expanding a Generative Sentence

The name for volcanoes in the Pacific is called the Ring of Fire. These are the volcanoes in Hawaii, South America, and Asia. Some are active that means they erupt. Some are dormant. That means they are quiet.

Power Writing

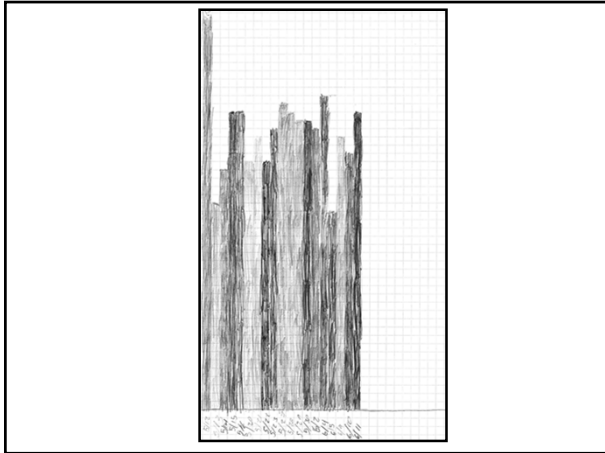
- Brief, timed writing events to improve fluency
- Students chart their own progress.

Extension:
progressive writing



Power Writing builds stamina.





RAFT Writing

Role

Audience

Format

Topic

Perspective taking is the focus.



RAFT in Writing: *Said Is Dead*

- **R:** Writer
- **A:** *said, nice, thing, and like*
- **F:** Eulogy
- **T:** Burying overused words



RAFT in Science



R: Marco Polo
A: Potential recruits
F: Recruiting poster
T: See the Silk Road!

RAFT in History



RAFT in Geometry

R: Isosceles triangle
A: Your three angles
F: Instant messages
T: Our unequal relationship



R: Lab mouse
A: Scientist
F: Protest letter
T: Set me free!

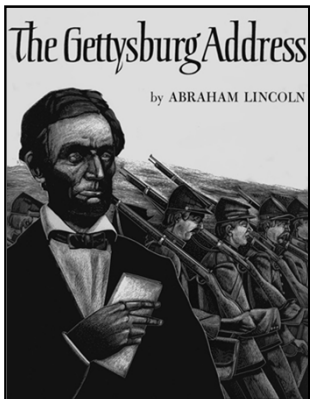
RAFT in Science



RAFT in English

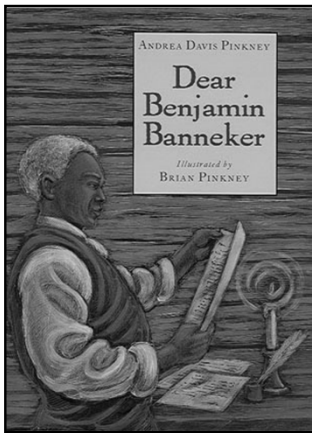
R: Brutus
A: Caesar
F: Letter of advice
T: Please step down as emperor





The Gettysburg Address

- R:** Person attending Gettysburg dedication
A: Family member
F: Letter
T: Lincoln's message



To Mr. BENJAMIN BANNEKER
 Philadelphia, August 30, 1791

Jefferson's Reply to Banneker

SIR, I THANK you, sincerely, for your letter of the 19th instant, and for the Almanac it contained. No body wishes more than I do, to see such proofs as you exhibit, that nature has given to our black brethren talents equal to those of the other colors of men; and that the appearance of the want of them, is owing merely to the degraded condition of their existence, both in Africa and America. I can add with truth, that no body wishes more ardently to see a good system commenced, for raising the condition, both of their body and mind, to what it ought to be, as far as the imbecility of their present existence, and other circumstances, which cannot be neglected, will admit.

I have taken the liberty of sending your Almanac to Monsieur de Condozett, Secretary of the Academy of Sciences at Paris, and Member of the Philanthropic Society, because I considered it as a document, to which your whole color had a right for their justification, against the doubts which have been entertained of them.

I am with great esteem, Sir, Your most obedient Humble Servant,
 THOMAS JEFFERSON.



RAFT Writing in American History

Role: Benjamin Banneker
Audience: Thomas Jefferson
Format: Formal letter of protest
Topic: If "all men are created equal," why do you own slaves?

Independent Writing

- Based on a prompt, students produce original writing
- Genre studies
- Rubrics guide students' completion of the task.

Demonstration Lesson: Contributions of Islam

Grade-7 History/Social Sciences

7.2.6: Understand the intellectual exchanges among Muslim scholars of Eurasia and Africa and the contributions Muslim scholars made to later civilizations in the areas of science, geography, mathematics, philosophy, medicine, art, and literature.

Starring: Anticipatory activities, read alouds, note taking, writing to learn, and questioning!



What does Islam have to do with libraries, hospitals, and paper?

Writing to Learn And Questioning

Anticipatory Activity

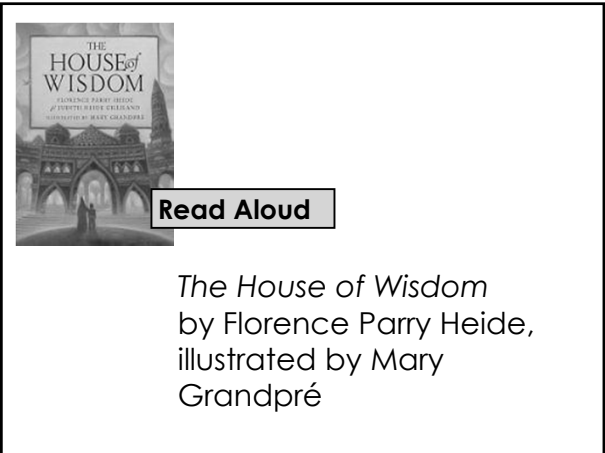
Figure 12.3: Anticipation Guide for Islam Unit

Name _____ Date: _____

Anticipation Guide for "Islam: Empire of Faith"

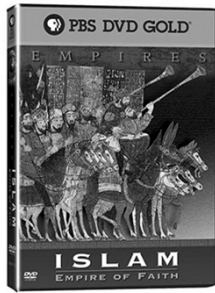
Directions: Read each statement and write a "+" for true statements and a "-" for false statements.

Statement	Before Viewing	After Viewing
Baghdad is the holy city of the Muslim faith.		
The pilgrimage of the Muslim faithful is called the Hajj.		
The Middle East is a natural land bridge between east and west.		
The center of the Middle East is the city of Mecca.		
Merchants were the most influential people in Baghdad.		
The center of scholarship was the House of Wisdom.		
Arabic numerals are still in use today.		
The growth of the Middle East can be traced to the Renaissance in Europe.		
Muslim scholars used the scientific process first described by the ancient Greeks.		
Muslim physicians invented hospitals.		
Development of the science of optics first began in the Islamic world.		
Discoveries about optics led to the later invention of the camera.		
Paper was first used in Egypt.		



Read Aloud

The House of Wisdom
by Florence Parry Heide,
illustrated by Mary Grandpré



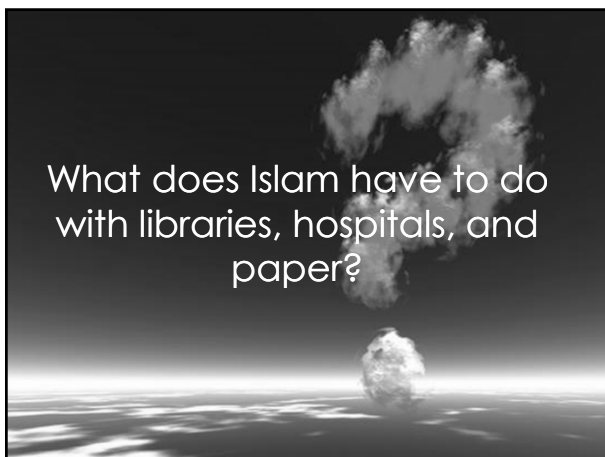
55:45–1:09

questioning	Renaissance	scientific process
Scholars	Hajj	Arabic numerals
Holy City	optics	cameras
Libraries	paper	land bridge
Baghdad	House of Wisdom	hospitals

Vocabulary Steppingstones

The historian al-Maqrizi described the opening of the House of Wisdom in 1004:

"In 1004 A.D. 'The House of Wisdom' was opened. The students took up their residence. The books were brought from [many other] libraries ... and the public was admitted. Whosoever wanted was at liberty to copy any book he wished to copy, or whoever required to read a certain book found in the library could do so. Scholars studied the Qur'an, astronomy, grammar, lexicography and medicine. The building was, moreover, adorned by carpets, and all doors and corridors had curtains, and managers, servants and porters were appointed to maintain the establishment. Out of the library of Caliph al-Hakim those books were brought which he had gathered—books in all sciences and literatures and of exquisite calligraphy such as no king had ever been able to bring together. **Al-Hakim permitted admittance to everyone, without distinction of rank, who wished to read or consult any of the books.**"



WIL to Promote Metacognition

- What did I learn today?
- What have I learned from reading this material?
- What don't I yet understand about this material?
- What do I think about this material?
- My goals ...
- The most clear insight I gained was ...
- What I want to ask is ...
- How does this information make me feel?
- What am I pleased with?
- The best thing about today was ...
- The most surprising thing was ...
- I'd like to learn more about ...

Exit Slips







To schedule professional development at your site, contact **Solution Tree** at (800) 733-6786.



Jefferson's Reply to Banneker

To Mr. BENJAMIN BANNEKER
Philadelphia, August 30, 1791

SIR, I THANK you, sincerely, for your letter of the 19th instant, and for the Almanac it contained. No body wishes more than I do, to see such proofs as you exhibit, that nature has given to our black brethren talents equal to those of the other colors of men; and that the appearance of the want of them, is owing merely to the degraded condition of their existence, both in Africa and America. I can add with truth, that no body wishes more ardently to see a good system commenced, for raising the condition, both of their body and mind, to what it ought to be, as far as the imbecility of their present existence, and other circumstances, which cannot be neglected, will admit.

I have taken the liberty of sending your Almanac to Monsieur de Condozett, Secretary of the Academy of Sciences at Paris, and Member of the Philanthropic Society, because I considered it as a document, to which your whole color had a right for their justification, against the doubts which have been entertained of them.

I am with great esteem, Sir, Your most obedient Humble Servant,

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

House of Wisdom

The historian al-Maqrizi described the opening of the House of Wisdom in 1004:

“In 1004 A.D. 'The House of Wisdom' was opened. The students took up their residence. The books were brought from [many other] libraries ... and the public was admitted. Whosoever wanted was at liberty to copy any book he wished to copy, or whoever required to read a certain book found in the library could do so. Scholars studied the Qur'an, astronomy, grammar, lexicography and medicine. The building was, moreover, adorned by carpets, and all doors and corridors had curtains, and managers, servants and porters were appointed to maintain the establishment. Out of the library of Caliph al-Hakim those books were brought which he had gathered—books in all sciences and literatures and of exquisite calligraphy such as no king had ever been able to bring together. **Al-Hakim permitted admittance to everyone, without distinction of rank, who wished to read or consult any of the books**” [emphasis added].

Writing to Sources: Guided Instruction

(Source: This article is excerpted from a document of the same name located at achievethecore.org/Student Achievement Partners. The nonprofit creates and disseminates open source materials that are available at no cost. The organization encourages states, districts, schools, and teachers to take and adapt resources.)

Writing about a text after doing a close read is an important opportunity for students to synthesize their knowledge about that text. When they write clearly and thoughtfully about a text, even if the piece of writing is relatively short, they construct meaning of that text in a way that sticks.

Sometimes, of course, we use writing to assess students' understanding of the text. More often, we use writing to *help students build deeper meaning* of the text. In addition, we use writing about a text to help students learn to write clearly, logically, and thoughtfully. In this way, the writing not only helps students synthesize meaning of the text – it helps them think clearly and thoughtfully about other texts.

All of the writing tasks are highly guided and scaffolded—it is assumed that the concept of writing to sources will be new and challenging for most students and teachers. However, the materials provided are meant to introduce a process that students (and teachers!) will eventually make their own. As you and your students become more comfortable with text based writing, be sure to modify your process to encourage independence. With careful instruction, much practice and gradual release of responsibility, all of your students will enrich and improve, not only their writing, but the way they think about and interact with what they read. The following two-day sequence provides a template for guiding students through this process..

DAY ONE (approximately 45 minutes)

Writing begins with the third read: The first read of the sequence establishes a first familiarity with the text. The second read is the “close read”—where the teacher guides students slowly and carefully through the text, prodding their thinking with text-dependent questions. On the third read, students read with a specific purpose, to gather information that will allow them to answer a Focusing Question for writing.

Pose the Focusing Question for writing: Before the third read, the teacher poses the Focusing Question for writing. Each selection has a single, carefully crafted, Focusing Question which will be answered by gathering and synthesizing evidence from the text. The teacher makes

(Write to Sources, page 1 of 3)

this question visible for all the students to see, and makes sure they all understand the question. The Focusing Question is *always* written at the top of the graphic organizer or notes sheet, reminding the students of the focus of their inquiry into this text.

Review the notes sheet or organizer: For students, taking notes captures the knowledge that they will be generating on this third read and using as they write their response to

the focusing question. The graphic organizers provided for each Focusing Question guide students in gathering, organizing and synthesizing evidence from the text. Every story has a graphic organizer or note sheet to cue students about what knowledge they will be looking for, and to help them make sense of that knowledge both as they go, and after the notes have been taken. For younger students or less experienced students, the teacher should create a large class note chart that can be used to model the process of taking notes. This can be done simply by enlarging the student chart and reproducing it on chart paper, a whiteboard or with a document camera.

Capture the knowledge, gather the notes: This is the longest step. As the teacher takes students through the third read, she stops frequently to take notes *related to the Focusing Question*. The purpose of this step is to gather evidence from the text that students will use in writing. Depending on the grade level and the text, these notes may be generated by the class and recorded by the teacher (and often copied later by the students) or taken by the students as they go along, with as much conversation and guidance as they need to gather good, useful evidence from the text for writing. **Note:** *you may want to have students paraphrase notes or quote directly from the text. In fourth grade, paraphrased reference to text is at standard; by fifth grade, the CC standards remind us that students need to also know how to accurately quote from a text.*

Review the notes, develop a Focus Statement for writing: It's essential that all students have a Focusing Statement for their writing that addresses the Focusing Question. The Focus Statement is a concise sentence (or sometimes two) that expresses the central idea of the writing piece and will be supported by the evidence they have gathered in the notes. The teacher helps guide this process. Depending on the writing task, the Focus Statement may be developed *before* gathering evidence (as a sort of hypothesis that students seek to prove using evidence from the text) or *after* gathering evidence (as a source of inquiry into the Focusing Statement). In both cases, the resulting Focus Statement needs to be clear, and needs to point the student clearly to the writing that will follow.

One or more sample Focus Statements are provided for each story. It's quite possible, even probable, that everyone will have the same Focus Statement. That's fine. Remember, this is not an assessment—this is instruction! If you have taken group or public notes, make sure that at this point every student copies the Focus Statement individually.

(Write to Sources, page 2 of 3)

DAY TWO (approximately 45 minutes)

Model the thinking or writing: It's important for students to know what this kind of thinking looks like in writing. How will they use the evidence to develop or support their Focus Statement? Begin by rereading the Focus Statement students have written down. Then, depending on the Focus Question, the text, the age of the students, and the familiarity of the students with this type of task, the teacher and the students create some part of the writing together. This might be a couple of sentences, or it might be a paragraph. The point is that, if students are going to be successful with this type of thinking or writing, they need to see what it looks like, and they need to know how to proceed. Make sure that every student copies this "model". It will become part of their finished writing piece.

Have students orally "talk the writing" for the rest of the piece: Using their notes, students "talk the writing" before they write it. This might be in partners; it might be in somewhat larger groups; it could be a circle setting of some sort. The point is, students need to be able to orally verbalize their thinking before they write it. Writing is hard: it's important to make sure, that when every student sits down with a pencil or at the keyboard, he is able to say to himself, "Hey, I get this. I know what I'm doing!"

Write the body of the piece: Either with a pencil or a keyboard, using their notes and the model, students write the body of the piece (up to the conclusion). For each Focusing Question, a sample piece designed to illustrate the type writing and thinking expected has been provided. This sample is not meant to be shared with students; it is included primarily to clarify the goals of the lesson for the teacher.

Write a concluding statement or section: The teacher helps students conclude. Depending on the Focusing Statement, the age of the students, the text itself, and the students' familiarity with the process, the conclusion could vary from a simple re-statement to an extension or reflection of some sort. For a more thoughtful conclusion, the teacher will often need to pose a relevant question or two and make sure students have ample opportunity for processing that idea together. Many lessons include suggestions for a reflective question to extend student thinking.

Optional Activity *(recommended, but may sometimes be omitted due to time constraints)*

Share, proofread and revise the piece: In partners or in some larger setting, students read their work aloud, checking meaning and correcting conventions. The teacher may use a variety of approaches for this; no matter what approach she uses, she is available to check for meaning and proofreading.

(Write to Sources, page 3 of 3)